

May 7, 1975

PRESIDENT: Senator Chambers.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Mr. Chairman, members of the Legislature. Senator Koch is opposed to this bill. He's opposed to the very concept of district elections. This is his attempt to try to kill the bill. First of all, it was discussed thoroughly on the floor the other day. The organization and operation of schools has been placed under the jurisdiction of the Legislature. Decisions like this are to be made by the Legislature and are not to be put to a vote of the people. Senator Koch is a member of an organization that includes school administrators, superintendents and others who have an advantage when they can control a school board. If they can offer a slate of people to be elected for the board and campaign for that slate they put in the kind of people, as a unit, that they can control as a unit. Senator Koch is not being completely above board. I don't think, when he offers this amendment . . . because he knows, that since the Constitution and the laws of this state place school questions before the Legislature, this is not something to be put to a vote of the people. The Legislature has voted to advance this bill. It has passed it on two other occasions. I think this incidious amendment being offered by Senator Koch should be defeated.

PRESIDENT: Senator Goodrich.

SENATOR GOODRICH: Mr. President, members of the body. I would rise in wholehearted support of the Koch amendment. There is nothing wrong with us letting the people that are going to be affected by this have a vote on the issue. I experienced several cases each year where we put things on the ballot for people to decide. This is no acception. There's nothing in the statutes or the Constitution that says that this is something that has to be decided by this body and not by the people of the local community. For that reason I would wholeheartedly plead with you, let's convert this bill to an election bill and let the people of Omaha, the ones that are going to be affected by it, make the decision. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Senator Cavanaugh.

SENATOR CAVANAUGH: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. I would oppose the amendment. There are two problems with Senator Koch proposing it. First of all he is against the bill. He's against district elections for School Board in Omaha. Secondly, it seems to me rather peculiar that Senator Koch introduced a bill into this Legislature that would have moved the primary election to September and, in effect, destroy or remove from the people of the State of Nebraska the right to state their preference for a presidential candidate prior to the nominating process of the major parties, which in effect denies the State of Nebraska the ability to state their preference for who would be President of this country. I don't believe that in that case he provided that change of electoral procedure would be put to a vote of the people first.